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Agenda item 9

QUESTION OF THE VIOLATION OF HUMAN RIGHTS AND FUNDAMENTAL FREEDOMS IN ANY PART OF THE WORLD

Letter dated 22 April 2000 from the Chargé d'affaires a.i. of the Permanent Mission of the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia to the United Nations Office at Geneva addressed to the Chairman of the Commission on Human Rights

I have the honour and pleasure of enclosing herewith* my letter dated 22 April 2000 that I have sent to Mrs. Mary Robinson, United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights, concerning the dramatic situation of Serbs detained in the prison in Kosovska Mitrovica, which constitutes a flagrant violation of human rights.

I would ask you to have this letter circulated as an official document of the fifty-sixth session of the Commission on Human Rights under agenda item 9.

(Signed) Branko BRANKOVICH
Ambassador
Chargé d'affaires a.i.

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* The annex is reproduced as received, in English only.

Annex

Excellency,

We have informed you by our letter No. 380 dated 15 April 2000 that 43 Serbs are being kept in custody for more than ten months in the district prison in Kosovska Mitrovica without a legal procedure being organised. You were also informed that due to that fact the majority of the detained Serbs went on a hunger strike. We kindly asked you to take action most urgently, in your capacity as UN High Commissioner for Human Rights, to the effect of their release or for the setting up of legal proceedings.

Unfortunately, you did not respond positively to our request by taking an action.

The health situation of the Serbs detained in the prison in Kosovska Mitrovica has worsened. The consilium team of doctors from Belgrade and from the Pristina University consider that the health of the detained Serbs is worsening on a daily basis.

Bernard Kouchner is keeping in custody for over ten months these Serbs in the district prison in Kosovska Mitrovica on the basis of unfounded accusations by terrorists of the so-called KLA and for purely political reasons. On the other hand, he finds it appropriate to publicly request the release of terrorists of the so-called KLA who are in prisons in the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia and who were convicted for crimes they had perpetrated. Such an action on the part of B. Kouchner constitutes a form of racism. This is an attitude Bernard Kouchner has had ever since he became Head of UNMIK and which is aimed at fully implementing the policy of a new fascism conducted by the American administration.

The Government of the FR of Yugoslavia considers that it is your duty, Madam Robinson, as UN High Commissioner for Human Rights, to undertake most urgently your utmost so that be stopped violations of human rights of Serbs in the prison in Kosovska Mitrovica carried out by the UN mission (KFOR, UNMIK and B. Kouchner).

In the case of the violations of human rights of the Serbs detained in this prison in Kosovska Mitrovica, you, Madam Robinson, are passing the most serious test as UN High Commissioner for Human Rights. Should you fail to act effectively and should the violations of human rights of Serbs in the prison in Kosovska Mitrovica continue on the part of the UN mission, the entire UN system of human rights that you represent will suffer serious negative consequences.

Her Excellency
Mrs. Mary ROBINSON
UN High Commissioner for Human Rights
Geneva

Excellency,

The Government of the FR of Yugoslavia demands that you most urgently take action with the UN mission in Kosovo and Metohija so that be put an end to violations of human rights of Serbs in the prison in Kosovska Mitrovica. To continue to keep them in custody as B. Kouchner now does, can have tragic consequences.

In expectation of your prompt action, please accept, Excellency, the assurances of my highest consideration.

Branko Brankovic
Ambassador
Chargé d'affaires a.i